

A POETICAL MEDITATION ON BRYANT'S THANATOPSIS.

The earth, so speaks the poet, is the grave
Of all those myriad legions who have passed
Through life into the portals gray of death.
Earth is the sepulchre, the beauteous home
Of those who have departed, and of those
Who shall depart to that same sepulchre.
The very elements that deck this earth
Compounded are from our frail human dust.
And so he sings, if one conceive a harp
To attend the movements of so grave a voice,
That when we face those portals we should come
Like who lie down to dreams and courteous sleep,
And wrap around them garments of repose.

Pain and disease, repulsiveness, decay
May be the ushers of that final state,
And disappointment with its potent harms
Or want, with its sharp flail may be the guide
That leads thee to these chambers; yet I deem
The author of our text does well to dull
And shroud these matters when he speaks of this;
To fix his eye on what of dignity
Of grandeur and of beauty the theme affords;
To fortify the mind against mean foes;
To nurture resignation; to endow
Death's hideous form with splendor and with peace.
So travel, he says, that when thou needs must join
The caravan that seeks the climes of death
Thou go not like the galley-slave much scourged
But pass within rather with chastened mirth.